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Letter dated 5 November 1993 from the Permanent Representative of Bosnia and Herzegovina to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

My Government has instructed me to request formally that you institute a full and public investigation of the charges that United Nations-mandated personnel in the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina may have failed to take necessary steps to stop, or even report, first-hand evidence of war crimes and concentration camps where Muslim and Croat women were held to be raped and sexually abused. More alarming is the possibility that some of these United Nations-mandated personnel may have actually taken part in these rapes and abuses as guests of the Serbian soldiers running these rape camps.

The article of 1 November 1993 in New York Newsday by Roy Gutman, when added to information previously given by other reputable sources, seems to add credibility to evidence that our Government has gathered with respect to these crimes. We have been reserved in our response up to this time.

Whether United Nations-mandated personnel actively participated in the crimes or were passive in the face of these crimes, this would constitute a violation of international law, including article 1 of the Geneva Conventions and Protocols, because there is an affirmative obligation to, at least, report violations of the Geneva Conventions and Protocols.

We request that the findings of your investigation be made public and that they be submitted to the International Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of the Former Yugoslavia, the Prosecutor's Office and the War Crimes Commission on the Former Yugoslavia. We will also report our evidence to these same international organs and ask them to pursue the matter. Our courts and legal system also remain available as venues for investigation and prosecution.

Finally, in view of the fact that many United Nations-mandated personnel, Governments and non-governmental organizations have exhibited dedication, courage and sensitivity in aiding the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina, we look to cooperate actively with other Governments in identifying any wrongdoing by their nationals. We once again wish to thank sincerely the overwhelming majority of individuals and their Governments for their commitments and brave efforts in helping our people.

May I ask your kind assistance in circulating the present letter as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 42, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Muhamed SACIRBEY
Ambassador and
Permanent Representative